

MEMORANDUM FOR: John H. Dunnigan  
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

FROM: Christopher Rogers  
Chief, Highly Migratory Species Management  
Division

SUBJECT: Federal Register notice announcing the  
availability of an issues and options paper  
regarding Atlantic shark management for  
Amendment 1 to the Fishery Management Plan  
for Atlantic Tunas, Swordfish and Sharks (HMS  
FMP)--DECISION MEMORANDUM

I request that you review the attached Federal Register notice for clearance for publication. Based on the results of the 2002 small coastal shark (SCS) stock assessment and the 2002 large coastal shark (LCS) stock assessment, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) is considering new management measures for sharks. The notice announces the availability of an issues and options paper regarding Atlantic sharks for Amendment 1 to the HMS FMP, requests comments from the public, and announces seven public scoping meetings.

#### BACKGROUND

Based on the 2002 stock assessments and the peer review of the 2002 LCS stock assessment, NOAA Fisheries believes the implementation of new management measures via an amendment to the HMS FMP is necessary to rebuild or prevent overfishing of Atlantic sharks. NOAA Fisheries anticipates completing this amendment and any related documents by January 1, 2004. Based on the results of the 2002 SCS stock assessment and the 2002 LCS stock assessment, NOAA Fisheries published an emergency rule on December 27, 2002, to implement management measures to rebuild or prevent overfishing of Atlantic sharks, pending an amendment, effective December 31, 2002 through June 30, 2003.

## REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

In anticipation of preparing an amendment to the HMS FMP, NOAA Fisheries is soliciting comments on implementation of commercial and recreational management measures that would rebuild or prevent overfishing of Atlantic sharks. NOAA Fisheries will use this Issues and Options paper as a starting point for discussions at seven public scoping meetings. Commercial management options discussed include quota levels, trip limits, minimum sizes, applying dead discards and state landings after a Federal closure to the quota, counting quota over- and underages, and fishery closure notices. Recreational management options discussed include retention limits, minimum sizes, authorized gear, and landing requirements. NOAA Fisheries is also seeking comment regarding the prohibited shark species and the organization of the species groupings, and the issuance of exempted fishing permits.

## RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that you sign the attached Federal Register notice for publication and fax notice.

1. I concur. \_\_\_\_\_  
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Date

2. I do not concur. \_\_\_\_\_  
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Date

Attachments

**NOAA Fisheries Announces the Availability of an Issues and Options paper Regarding Atlantic Sharks for Amendment 1 to the Atlantic Tunas, Swordfish, and Sharks Fishery Management Plan, Requests Comments, and Announces Seven Public Meetings**

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) announces the availability of an issues and options paper regarding Atlantic sharks for Amendment 1 to the Atlantic Tunas, Swordfish, and Sharks Fishery Management Plan (HMS FMP), requests public comment, and announces the dates and times of seven public meetings. The issues and options paper examines management alternatives available to rebuild or prevent overfishing of Atlantic sharks consistent with the large coastal sharks and small coastal sharks stock assessments, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), and other relevant Federal laws. Based on the 2002 stock assessments, NOAA Fisheries believes the implementation of new management measures via an amendment to the HMS FMP is necessary to rebuild or prevent overfishing of Atlantic sharks. NOAA Fisheries anticipates completing this amendment and any related documents by January 1, 2004.

NOAA Fisheries is requesting comments on the issues and options for this amendment. These commercial and recreational options include, but are not limited to: commercial quota levels, commercial trip limits, applying dead discards and state landings after a Federal closure to the commercial quota, counting commercial quota over- and underages, commercial fishery closure notices, recreational retention limits, recreational authorized gear, recreational landing requirements, commercial and recreational minimum sizes, prohibited shark species, and the organization of the species groupings. A copy of the document can be obtained from our website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hmspg.html> or by contacting Heather Stirratt or Karyl Brewster-Geisz at (301) 713-2347.

NOAA Fisheries will hold seven public meetings to receive comments from fishery participants and other members of the public on the options mentioned above and described in the Issues and Options paper.

The meeting schedule is as follows:

Location	Address	Date	Time
Silver Spring, MD	Holiday Inn 8777 Georgia Ave. Silver spring, MD 20910 Contact: Karyl Brewster-Geisz @ (301) 713-2347	February 10, 2003	1-6 PM
Montauk, NY	Montauk Fire House 12 Flamingo Avenue Montauk, NY 11954 Contact: Heather Stirratt @ (301) 713-2347	February 19, 2003	7-9 PM
Cocoa Beach, FL	Cocoa Beach Public Library 550 North Brevard Avenue Cocoa Beach, FL 32931 Contact: Greg Fairclough @(727) 570-5447	February 25, 2003	7-9 PM
Madeira Beach, FL	City of Madeira Beach 300 Municipal Dr. Madeira Beach, FL 33708 Contact: Greg Fairclough @(727) 570-5447	February 27, 2003	7-9 PM
Ocean City, MD	Ocean City Council Chambers 301 Baltimore Ave. Ocean City, MD 21842 Contact: Karyl Brewster-Geisz @ (301) 713-2347	March 5, 2003	7-9 PM
Manteo, NC	North Carolina Aquarium Roanoke Island PO Box 967 Airport Road Manteo, NC 27954 Contact: Heather Stirratt @ (301) 713-2347	March 6, 2003	7-9 PM
Port Aransas, TX	University of Texas Marine Science Institute Visitor's Center (located on Cotter St. near beach) 750 Channel View Dr. Port Aransas, TX 78373 Contact: Heather Stirratt @ (301) 713-2347	March 11, 2003	7-9 PM

The meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Heather Stirratt, 301-713-2347, at least 7 days prior to the meeting.

This FAX notice is a courtesy to Atlantic Shark Fisheries interests to keep you informed about your fishery. Official notice of Federal

fishery actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of the Federal Register. For further information, contact Karyl Brewster-Geisz or Heather Stirratt at 301-713-2347 or Greg Fairclough at 727-570-5447.

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Richard Surdi  
Acting Director  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries

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Date  
Jan. 22, 2003